



CANDICE S. MILLER, Secretary of State
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TREASURY BUILDING, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48918

November 28, 2001

The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers
United States Representative
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Ehlers:

As Michigan's Chief Election Officer, I support the bipartisan election reform bill (H.R. 3295) sponsored by U.S. Reps. Bob Ney (R-OH) and Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and ask you to consider supporting it as well.

The legislation is designed to address the weaknesses revealed in our elections process in the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election. Many of the recommendations issued by the National Commission on Federal Election Reform are contained in H.R. 3295. Noteworthy among them is the requirement that all states develop a statewide voter registration system similar to Michigan's Qualified Voter File. The National Commission on Federal Election Reform highlighted Michigan's QVF system as one of the "best practices" in voter registration reform in the United States.

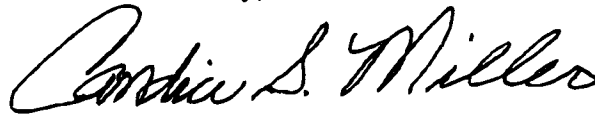
In May of this year I recommended to the Michigan Legislature that Michigan adopt a statewide, uniform voting system. Michigan currently employs five different voting systems to administer elections: optical scan, punch card, direct recording electronic (computer touch screen), mechanical voting machines and paper ballots. H.R. 3295 offers the only feasible funding mechanism to make a uniform voting system a reality. Under the proposed legislation, \$2.25 billion in grant funds are authorized; if these funds are appropriated, Michigan could realize as much as \$75 million to upgrade several aspects of our elections system. Under the legislation, states may use the funds to purchase voting systems, educate voters and election workers, ensure access for voters with physical disabilities and improve the administration of elections.

The legislation also establishes a comprehensive voting system standards program. The standards program joins federal, state and local officials in a partnership that will increase the quality and security of the voting systems in use throughout the country as well as their ease of operation. This new program will significantly enhance the testing and certification of new voting systems. Just as importantly, the bill creates a grant program for the development of new voting and election technology that will improve our elections process in the years to come.

As an election official I am keenly aware of the delicate balance in the federal-state oversight of the elections process. This legislation successfully maintains that balance by preserving the election related functions currently performed by state and local governments while adding new federal resources and guidance to improve the quality and integrity of the system.

If you have any questions concerning the impact of H.R. 3295 on Michigan's elections system please do not hesitate contact Christopher Thomas in the Department of State's Bureau of Elections. Phone: (517) 373-2540.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Candice S. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Candice" being more prominent and the last name "Miller" following in a similar style.

Candice S. Miller
Secretary of State

cc: United States Representative Bob Ney
United States Representative Steny Hoyer